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Visibility of Diversity within Association of Research Libraries Websites

by Lori S. Mestre

Libraries in the United States have worked towards developing more inclusive environments and programs. This inclusiveness should also extend to the online library presence. This article provides results of a web page scan of all Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in the United States to document the visibility of diversity on their pages. A discussion of the importance of this visibility and examples and recommendations for website design to include diversity elements are also provided.

INTRODUCTION

The website may be the first and possibly only interaction that students have with the library. It can create a welcoming image in people's minds through their face to face or online services, and can send clear, consistent messages about their values and image. These public venues (including websites) do represent an organization's image and values. They are available to everyone and can help to promote and recognize diversity among staff, students, and patrons within the Libraries by increasing communication, understanding, and respect among people of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There are various dimensions and aspects of diversity and the focus of this study was limited to representation of racial or ethnic diversity on webpages, specifically underrepresented groups, including Hispanics/Latinos, Native Americans, African Americans, and also Asian Americans. This study did not seek to explore representation of diversity related to disabilities, sexual orientation, religion, geography, age, education, income, etc.

Websites also make an instant statement regarding the library's diversity commitment. They provide a window into the organization for potential employees, patrons, and casual observers (window shoppers, a.k.a. web surfers). A library's presentation of itself on the web creates an impression of the library in the viewer. Depending upon the placement of links, diversity messages may be inconsistent from the perspective of new or current employees, and clarity of priorities can vary widely.

There are several important reasons that libraries should make the visibility of diversity efforts, policies and connections an important aspect in their website design. A primary one is that it projects that the library or organization is working towards a climate of trust, collaboration, productivity, innovation, shared power, and creativity. It also indicates that there are efforts towards recognition of an all inclusive environment and towards providing services that are representative of the needs of a diverse population.

In many cases the parent institution prominently highlights diversity efforts and strategic initiatives, but not the library. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) could be considered the parent institution for all ARL libraries and is a good model for how it highlights diversity efforts. Its website provides resources for librarians, as well as prominence throughout the websites of diversity efforts and programs. Tabs at the top of the ARL site provide links to several diversity initiatives that highlight the importance of recruiting, representing, and advancing underrepresented racial and ethnic groups into librarianship.¹ In this analysis very few of the ARL libraries highlighted diversity information, such as contact person, diversity web page, diversity statement, diversity mission, diversity values, diversity committee, diversity action plan, diversity events, or diversity related collections. Highlighting such efforts demonstrates

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to the public at large that this is a high achieving diverse learning organization that is working toward being a discrimination-free workplace with barriers removed that might impede advancement and fulfillment.

Another consideration for making diversity more visible on web pages is to reflect the diversity of those visiting the site. Goodheart acknowledged that younger Americans, especially those of college age, want to be among people with similar backgrounds and ethnicity.² If they do not see themselves, their values, or their needs reflected in web pages or at service points they may feel isolated and reluctant to explore the services. Students want to be identified as belonging in the environment and connected to its values, culture, and image, so including representative images or information that students can relate to from their culture can build that sense of belonging.

When people are visible members of an organization, their identification and support for the organization increase and they may lend more support if they feel the institution (or library) projects similar values as their own.^{3,4} They, in turn, may become relationship builders. If little or no representation of certain groups appears, then these groups may believe that their values are not important to the organization and relationships will be slow in forming. Tucker also related the need to reach out to Generation M (the millennial generation entering college) with technology and to tune messages to these groups as well, since this generation relies on technology, not face to face interaction, for communication.⁵

Web Page Analysis Related To Diversity Efforts

Very few studies have been conducted that analyze web page content or design related to diversity visibility, and even fewer have been conducted related to libraries. Among the handful of recent studies, Young examined CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) libraries' web sites to find out how diversity-related collections are represented.⁶ The CIC is comprised of the Big Ten universities, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. She notes that "While the parent institutions of these academic libraries have demonstrated their commitment to diversity and provide access to that information with a link from their home pages, most libraries fail to demonstrate diversity's importance on their Web sites."⁷

Even though libraries make extensive use of the Web to deliver information about their collections and services, the libraries Young examined (CIC libraries) do not appear to take advantage of the Web to promote their policies, guidelines, or other information about library diversity to the public. Young also assessed how many clicks from the home page it took to get to diversity resources (whether there were research guides related to a particular area, or other diversity-related resources). Although it might be assumed that the CIC institutions are supporting the teaching, learning, and research activities on their university campuses, she found that the information was not organized or presented from the first three levels of their site. Therefore, the lack of visibility might lead to the conclusion that those libraries do not support diversity efforts.

Other studies that have relevance to diversity representation on web pages include some conducted at various institutions. Brunner and Brown, for example, examined the homepages of the NCAA's Division I schools for visual elements that showcase the university's attention to diversity and inclusivity.⁸ Three hundred twenty-six homepages were examined from the list of member schools of the NCAA (www.ncaa.org). The vast majority of homepages (86%; $n=281$) contained visual images of people with 80 percent being women. Further, 63% ($n=178$) of the homepages with visual images of people presented images of people of color. Judging from these results alone it appears that many university administrators and public relations officers make a conscious decision to promote images of diversity in race and gender on their homepages. They also found, however, that 35% ($n=97$) of the images of people depict people of

different races interacting together. In other words, for the most part, white people only appear with white people and people of color only appear with people of color. In short, the people who appear on these pages are visually segregated in this virtual world. Such images might give the impression that the universities are more interested in promoting images of diversity than diversity itself. They concede that visual segregation may be nothing more than coincidence, or it may, in fact, show reality. They argue that a university should consider a homepage to be a place to put its "best foot forward" and to make a favorable impression about priorities and values.

Given the wide reach of websites, Brunner and Brown caution institutions to be mindful of the images and messages presented on those websites.⁹ Because students may "talk" about universities and libraries on blogs, text messages, instant messages, websites, social networking sites and e-mails, it becomes imperative for libraries to find ways to connect to these diverse populations up front. "Word of mouth" can be a great recruiting tool and an endorsement for visiting (or not visiting) a particular library; thus, creating a positive image related to diversity visibility can help build relationships.

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A study by Osario identified trends in the design and content of home pages for web sites of Science-Engineering Libraries.¹⁰ Forty-five web sites from universities in the USA and Canada were chosen and their design characteristics and hypertext links analyzed. Osario points out that a strong web presence by libraries serves as a starting point for patrons conducting library research to explore the resources available.

Cook and Finlyason were interested in the impact that culture had on web site design and what cultural accommodations were considered in the design.¹¹ They assessed websites of various county bureaus based on Hofstede's five cultural dimensions: Power Distance Index; Individualism vs. Collectivism; Masculinity vs. Femininity; Uncertainty Avoidance Index; and Long vs. Short Term Orientation. Although this study rated websites of various countries rather than libraries or universities, the suggestions for improving the content of websites can be applied both broadly and specifically. A general suggestion was to design for neutrality in order to accommodate cultural differences in order to ensure that no one's sensibilities are offended. However, in order to accomplish that goal, the site might then become sterile and unappealing. They concluded that institutions should assess and revise websites using feedback and by measuring preferences and attitudes of the dominant cultures. Various elements of some of the studies described above were used to do an analysis of library websites in this study, including the representation of diversity and location of diversity on a site.

METHODOLOGY

Content Analysis

The present study examined the 107 ARL libraries in the United States using content analysis. Content analysis can be used to study

many areas of the behavioral and social sciences and is often used in journalism, communication, public relations, and business. It is a systematic and objective method of analysis and can be used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence in an objective manner.¹² It can indicate pertinent features such as comprehensiveness of coverage or the intentions, biases, prejudices, and oversights of authors, publishers, as well as all other persons responsible for the content of materials. Replicable and valid inferences can be made from data analyzed using content analysis.¹³ In addition, content analysis is an ideal research methodology for the analysis of documents because it provides a logical basis for understanding how messages are constructed.

The search process for the web pages included looking for specific categories of information related to diversity or multiculturalism. As mentioned in the introduction, the focus of diversity here was on ethnic and racial diversity of underrepresented groups, particularly Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans and also Asian Americans. For this study the term "disabilities" was not included as a term or category to consider, nor were pages related to disabilities included in the analysis. Perhaps because of the American with Disabilities Act and accessibility concerns, web pages generally provide some visibility of disability links. The web page categories shown in Table 1 were analyzed to determine if there were any links or content related to diversity. If there was an instance, a checkmark was placed in the Yes column. If not, a checkmark was placed in the NO column. The data were entered in an

Excel spreadsheet, along with any other features, such as urls or contact information that could be found. The search was done in January 2009 and again in September 2009 and July 2010. During that time period many links had changed without redirects, adding to the frustration of locating these elements. Some ended up being even more buried in the library web page structure or were not found.

Challenges During the Process

Library Headings

Since the terminology used to designate headings is not consistent, an effort was made to cover the different variations of titles used for the same kind of link under one generic heading. Dewey indicated that one major problem in locating services and resources on a web site is the terminology that is used.¹⁴ Obscure labels (topic headings), or labels that are too general or too specific are often found in many home pages. In this study it was important to think of all of the cognates that might be used to describe a category. For example, the term "About" was usually consistent throughout the library web pages. Other headings, however, such as Staff Directory, Committees, Reports, or Contacts varied. The staff directory (or its equivalent term) was examined for each library. At times this was available as its own heading or under the "About Us," "Services," "Directory," or "Contact Us" headings. Not all of the directories provided subject information or contact information. Some provided departments, such as Reference or Cataloging. Many of those links to the departments did not provide staff information. This meant that more exploration was needed to determine the required term needed to find specific librarian contact information along with job roles.

Site Searches

When information was not found using the above checklist, library site searches were performed. Locating the library site search was not always obvious due to the variety of places it may exist on web pages. In some instances it was not found at all. When doing a site search the following terms, in various constructions, were used: diversity librarian; diversity statement; diversity mission statement; diversity committee; diversity team; diversity working group; diversity plan, etc. Diversity was interchanged with multicultural and multiculturalism (or using truncation as well). If nothing appeared for the above searches, the term "outreach" was substituted in place of diversity, even though this broadened the scope of what the purpose of the librarian, plan or committee would be. As a last resort only the term "diversity" or "multicultural" was used, which understandably resulted in many unusable hits. However, it sometimes led to some documents that had been prepared related to diversity. The same strategies were used when using the advanced search in Google, although in those instances the name of the library was added as well.

Time for Searching

Each search was timed to see how long it might take to locate any information related to diversity. The searches were performed by a trained graduate student in a library and information science program, as well as an experienced librarian. The range was five seconds for the library that had a diversity link on the front page to over 15 min. Fifteen minutes was the maximum amount of time allowed for searching. It was assumed that an individual would not spend more than 15 min searching without success. The average time was 5 min to find something on the checklist. Libraries may have this material or information, but in many instances it was not readily available online, even after 15 min of searching.

Table 1
Checklist Used For Each Library to Document
Diversity Visibility in Their Web Site

Name of Library:				
Web address:				
Location	Yes	No	URL/Name	
Front page				
About the library				
Services				
Committees page				
Reports				
Publicity				
Subject Specialist/liaison (for contact person)				
Contact us (for contact person)				
Staff directory (for contact person)				
Site search				
SiteMap				
Google search for diversity/ multicultural and name of library				
Ask a librarian (as last resort to find out if there is a contact or information)				
Other				
Time to find any information related to diversity				

Table 2
Results of Diversity Visibility of ARL Web Pages

Item	Yes	No
Contact person related to diversity	9% (n = 10)	91% (n = 97)
Designated web page for Diversity efforts	22% (n = 24)	78% (n = 83)
Included in a values statement	27% (n = 29)	73% (n = 78)
Included in a vision statement	14% (n = 15)	86% (n = 92)
Included in a mission statement	16% (n = 17)	84% (n = 90)
Diversity statement	13% (n = 14)	87% (n = 93)
Diversity plan	7% (n = 7)	93% (n = 100)
Diversity committee	21% (n = 22)	78% (n = 85)
Included in a strategic plan	37% (n = 39)	64% (n = 68)
Total libraries = 107		

RESULTS

Once information was located, a checklist similar to the one below was used to document the types of diversity-related links or information. The web page url was also included in the checklist. Table 2 provides the results of the scan.

As indicated in Table 2, only two items (diversity included in a strategic plan or diversity included in a values statement) were located for over one quarter of the libraries. That inclusion indicates that the library had an overall strategic plan or vision statement and that the library mentioned something related to the importance of diversity within those statements. The findings in Table 2 show that except for those two instances, the items listed were not found for three quarters of the libraries. Further examination of the data reveals that twenty-seven percent (n = 29) of the libraries had no mention of diversity in a mission, vision, values statement or strategic plan, nor did they have a dedicated librarian for diversity/multicultural efforts or a diversity committee.

Diversity Links from the Front Page

Although many libraries had links to disability information on the front page, four libraries had a top level link to diversity information: Ohio State University (in the drop down link for "About OSUL" (http://library.osu.edu/index_jm.php); Penn State (on left column) <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/diversity.html>; The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the right column "Library Initiatives" (<http://www.library.illinois.edu/>) and the University of Louisville Libraries (<http://louisville.edu/library/> in the footer which connects to the campus Office of Diversity). On several pages, exhibits, workshops or news were mentioned on the front page, which may have included topics related to culture or diversity. Kent State, for example, had a posting under the "Features" section on the front page for a "Librarian Diversity Internship". Rutgers University provided a box on the front page with the word "Welcome" in various languages (<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>). Each term, when clicked, opens up a page in that language that serves as an introduction to the library.

An investigation of web pages for categories similar to "About the Library" or "About Us" revealed that seven libraries had links to diversity. As of July 2010, those libraries were: North Carolina University Library (<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/libinfo>); Penn State Library (<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/about.html>); Purdue University Library (<http://www.lib.purdue.edu/about/>); Rutgers Library (<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/about/about.shtml>); the University of Michigan Library (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/about-mlibrary>); the University of Notre Dame Hesburgh Library ([\[www.library.nd.edu/about/\]\(http://www.library.nd.edu/about/\)\) and the University of Washington Library \(<http://www.lib.washington.edu/about/>\).](http://</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

Beyond the scan of the "home page" and the "About the Libraries" pages, information about diversity was found in numerous places on the websites and often more than three or four links in. Specific results from each of the categories in Table 2 are further detailed below.

Contact Person Related to Diversity

Web pages were scanned to find a contact person either related to diversity or multicultural efforts or a designated librarian to guide or coordinate diversity or multicultural efforts. In January 2009 fourteen dedicated positions related to diversity were found. In July 2010, that number decreased to ten that could be found on the websites of the 107 ARL libraries in the United States. Titles varied and included 'diversity librarian,' 'multicultural librarian,' 'outreach librarian for multicultural services,' 'ethnic studies librarian,' or similar titles. The majority of ARL libraries (73%, n = 78) have subject specialists for different populations, such as for African American Studies, Latino Studies, Native American Studies, Asian American Studies, or Ethnic Studies. Although their role may be to provide services other than collection development, it is often not possible to discern that information from the page. During a scan of directories for subject specialists a few entries related to multicultural resources were found. These usually linked to a libguide or guide to the types of databases or resources available related to ethnic groups. One example is the Kansas Libraries Subject Librarian directory. An entry for Multiculturalism and Diversity is found in the subject librarian list, along with contact information for the librarian. However, this librarian is the librarian for several areas and not a designated librarian for multicultural services. Yet a decision was made to include a category for multiculturalism and diversity, even when the individual subject areas are also included on the subject librarian directory. The linked page provides suggested article databases, subject guides and other library help (<http://www.lib.ku.edu/infogateway/index.cfm?type=subject&page=contact&sid=91>). This is an example of options libraries have for providing a contact link related to multicultural or diversity information, even if there is no dedicated librarian.

Designated Web Page for Diversity Efforts

In addition to web pages created by a dedicated librarian for diversity efforts, twenty-one diversity committees maintained a dedicated diversity web page (see Appendix A), even though two had not been updated recently. In all, less than one quarter of the ARL libraries had findable pages specifically related to diversity efforts. Representative pages include: University of Michigan (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/library-diversity-committee>); Pennsylvania State Libraries (<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/diversity.html>); Rutgers University Libraries Diversity Resources (<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/about/diversity/diversity.shtml>); The University of Connecticut Libraries (<http://lib.uconn.edu/Diversity/>); and The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (<http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/diversity/index.html> yes diversity page).

"In all, less than one quarter of the ARL libraries had findable pages specifically related to diversity efforts."

The University of Buffalo Libraries has a section on their web site under Get Help for Student Support. Included in the categories is a link for International Students <http://library.buffalo.edu/libraries/gethelp/international/>. Although not directly related to racial or ethnically

diverse students it provides resource and help links for students and pictures and contact information to librarians.

The University of Iowa libraries has a Director responsible for Human Resources and Diversity Programs as well as Librarian Liaisons to UI Cultural Centers (linked under the Services tab on the web page) and a web page that includes pictures and contact information for the librarians: <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/ref/liaison/index.html>.

Included in a Values Statement

A values statement attempts to capture the basic philosophy of the organization. It may also represent a moral position or how people want to behave with or treat each other. There were twenty-nine libraries (27%) that had some mention of diversity included in a values statement. Oftentimes the values statement was included within a strategic plan or mission statement. Very few libraries had created a stand-alone values statement for diversity. Three examples of the incorporation of diversity within a Library's values statement are listed below.

- Auburn University Libraries (<http://www.lib.auburn.edu/dean/docs/values.html>)
- Fairness: The Library values diversity in its staff, users, and collections. We strive to provide equity of access to information, and a climate of openness, acceptance, and respect for all individuals and points of view.
- The University of Arizona (<http://www.library.arizona.edu/about/organization/principles.html>)
 - III. DIVERSITY
 - We value, respect, and are strengthened by viewpoints and experiences outside the dominant culture.
 - We strive to build a multi-cultural organization.
- University of Iowa Libraries (<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/about/strategic.html>)
 - **Diversity.** A welcoming environment that is respectful, supportive and responsive to the changing needs of an increasingly diverse community of library users.
 - **Collections.** Free and open access to ideas across time and cultures by building, organizing and preserving distinctive collections in all formats to meet the needs of the University community.
 - **Staff.** A diverse, supportive, respectful, and collegial work environment that values differences and nurtures individual talents through staff development and continuing education; organizational efficiency, flexibility, and accountability.

Included in a Vision Statement

A vision statement expresses the aspirations for where a library wants to go and can serve as a guideline for future strategic decisions. Elements of mission and vision statements may be combined. The survey of ARL library webpages identified that 14% ($n = 15$) of the ARL libraries had a vision statement, although diversity was not mentioned in each instance. The following, from the University of California Riverside Values Document (<http://library.ucr.edu/content/lfmp/vision.pdf>), provides one example of a statement that articulates the value of diversity:

1. To attract and maintain an ethnically, culturally and educationally diverse and highly competent staff in support of student and faculty success, with effective work space, efficient work processes, and state-of-the-art equipment to engage them fully in the University's goals of supporting faculty and student success.

2. To design library services and facilities that will embrace and celebrate the University's strong commitment to diversity and the pluralistic characteristics of the student body, with UCR being the most diverse campus within the UC system and the 4th most diverse in the nation.

Included in a Mission Statement

The mission statement of an organization is a short, but complete description of the overall purpose and intentions of that organization, unit, program, course or activity. It states what is to be achieved, but not how this should be done. Many libraries had a strategic plan and/or a mission statement, even if diversity was not reflected in them. All of the mission statements were evaluated to see if terms such as diversity, equality, equal treatment, fairness, or respect were included resulting in 16% ($n = 17$) including something related to diversity in those statements. Three examples of how diversity was reflected follow:

- University of Massachusetts Amherst (<http://www.library.umass.edu/about/>) As a gateway to knowledge, the Libraries are a key partner in teaching, learning, and research at UMass Amherst [and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts]. Supporting freedom of inquiry, the Libraries foster a diverse and inclusive environment in which to engage with ideas and acquire the critical skills necessary for life-long learning. By combining the latest information technology with excellent public service, the staff builds and maintains a rich information environment, facilitates access to it, and creates a hub of campus and community scholarly activity.
- University of Michigan Library, from their Diversity Committee page has a specific Diversity Mission (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/library-diversity-committee/>): *The Library Diversity Committee is dedicated to provide leadership to the staff of the University of Michigan Library by promoting understanding in various areas of diversity, and to collaborate with members of the campus and the community to bridge individual and collective experiences; to serve as an advisory group to the library administration, reporting on diversity programs and on staff and patron concerns; and to lead in the creation and implementation of diversity activities.*
- University of Oregon Libraries, from their diversity committee plan (<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/diversity/initiatives.html>): *We therefore affirm, in the words of the University Mission Statement, 'the principles of equality of opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community and an acceptance of true diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community.' We affirm the University's commitment to equity, to diversity, and to the development of faculty, students, officers of administration, and staff who will participate effectively in a global society."*

Diversity Statement

A diversity statement (philosophical statement) sometimes originates from a mission statement. It may be included to supplement a mission statement by articulating a commitment to diversity. It may be a working definition or statement to use as one goes about trying to accomplish the initiatives related to diversity. Its intention may be to keep diversity at the forefront and may include goals. One value is that it lets the public know why the library values racial and ethnic diversity. Diversity statements provide tools for holding individuals in a variety of leadership positions accountable for addressing issues of diversity. They also provide vehicles to help those on campus who feel marginalized to voice their concerns. Fourteen diversity statements could be found on the web pages of the ARL libraries (see Appendix B).

Diversity Plan

A diversity plan can be an extension of a broader strategic plan. Some are textual and philosophical, whereas others include goals,

strategies and action steps. Lengths differ as well. There are various common elements of a diversity plan: the mission or commitment to diversity; goals that can be achieved within a certain timeframe; specific activities or actions that will be undertaken. Many are based on the library's or university's strategic plan. Five of eight libraries with plans were found from the library pages. Three were found by doing a Google search. Some libraries mentioned a diversity plan, but there was no visible link to it. Following are links to eight diversity plans that could be found: Auburn University (library faculty diversity plan) <http://www.lib.auburn.edu/dean/docs/diversity.html>; Rutgers University Libraries Diversity Plan 2009-2010 http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/about/diversity/RUL_diversity_plan_09-10.pdf; University of Colorado at Boulder <http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/dean/diversity.htm>; University of Indiana- Purdue (an extension of the University's Diversity Vision, Mission and Goals statement <http://www-lib.iupui.edu/about/diversity/plan>; University of Maryland <http://www.lib.washington.edu/About/diversity/>; University of Minnesota Libraries <https://wiki.lib.umn.edu/CES/DiversityActionPlan>; University of Oregon <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/diversity/initiatives.html>; and University of Washington <http://www.lib.washington.edu/About/diversity>;

Diversity Committee

Results of this web analysis revealed that there were twenty-two instances of diversity committees that could be found via webpages (see Appendix B). Additionally, the seven LUAC University of California libraries work together to maintain one diversity committee. The content for diversity pages varies greatly. Some libraries simply mention that they have a diversity committee with no further information or contact links. Others provide not only the committee and contact information, but also a mission statement, diversity action plan, programs, resources, annual reports and initiatives. It may be that links to diversity committees are restricted to staff intranets and not visible to the public. Several libraries had a diversity committee available for public view in September 2009, but in May 2010 it was not accessible (Arizona State, Michigan State, Penn State, University of Utah, for example). Several libraries indicated that they had a diversity committee, although no visible link to a Diversity Committee page was found. In other instances annual reports were available via Google for various diversity committees, but upon further examination of those library web pages, the information from those reports was not visibly apparent.

Included in a Strategic Plan

Because diversity plans and statements are developed in response to a library's strategic plan, most strategic plans often include references to diversity. In this scan, 36% ($n = 38$) of the libraries had a strategic plan that could be readily found. One example of a Library diversity strategic plan is from Penn State <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/diversity.html>. This page includes "A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: University Libraries Strategic Plan 2004-2009", as well as the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan.

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Libraries play an integral role in the success of diversity initiatives within universities. They provide access to information on diversity-related topics (in print and online), provide accessible services, offer research assistance, create exhibits, offer programming, and contribute to the diverse workforce. While many parent institutions of the academic libraries in this study have demonstrated their commitment to diversity and provide access to that information with a link from their home pages, this visibility was not apparent at most of the library web sites. Even when information could eventually be found, it was often hidden behind multiple layers of the web site or only found through a site search. The problem of multiple layers in web sites is

one of the major concerns Dalal mentioned.¹⁵ Users can experience disorientation when moving into deeper layers. In this study, two and three layers were very common, but there were instances of four, five, or more layers before anything related to diversity could be found.

"While many parent institutions of the academic libraries in this study have demonstrated their commitment to diversity and provide access to that information with a link from their home pages, this visibility was not apparent at most of the library web sites."

The libraries in this study were not graded on whether or not the categories on the checklist were found. A previous study did grade websites of 57 teacher preparation schools' in Illinois on the visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) in those pages.¹⁶ Institutions were awarded points if there was evidence of various indicators or terms. Seventy two percent of the programs (41 of the 57) received a grade of F (failing). If the same had been done for this study of visibility of diversity in ARL libraries web sites, the results would show that less than one quarter of the libraries actively reflect diversity on their pages. This finding alone does not mean that 75% of libraries are "failing" in regards to diversity. It does mean, however, that libraries may not be putting their best foot forward if their most visible and widely available tool (their web page) includes little about diversity.

This study was an exploratory study to record instances of diversity on ARL websites. Although it did document where on the library website those instances occurred e.g. under which categories and how many layers within the site, it did not attempt to create any benchmarks for measuring the success or failure of a web presence's attention to diversity. Future studies might look to evaluate correlation between the inclusion of diversity in the library's goals/vision/mission/values statements and subsequent appearances of diversity throughout the site. It would also be good to look at libraries that are well known for their diversity efforts and evaluate their websites for how and where diversity is included. Those examinations might yield valuable information regarding whether libraries that put emphasis on diversity in their goals/mission/values/visions statements also provide greater diversity awareness throughout their sites and also in their "real world" efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study, the following recommendations are provided to help make diversity more visible on library web pages.

- Give diversity a prominent place within the web site's structure, preferably at as high a level as possible. Not all features need to be linked from the home page of a library. However, when planning web site design, consideration should be taken to avoid a user needing to click on several layers to find the needed information or to enter terms in the site's search engine.
- Provide identification and contact information for members of a diversity or similar committee and for administrators responsible for diversity. Libraries should evaluate their web pages to determine if their diversity related information is transparent and easily accessible. Not every library will decide to create a diversity webpage, have a diversity librarian, or diversity committee. However, each library is most likely doing something related to diversity, for example: creating subject guides, exhibits, programs or have committees that discuss issues reflecting

diversity. That information needs to be made visible. At the minimum, a contact person related to diversity or multicultural services or programs should be available from a website. Students or faculty may be more likely to communicate with someone if they feel there is a designated person for their area. In the cases where there is no librarian designated as multicultural or diversity librarian, perhaps one of the librarians working with specific ethnic groups could be listed as contact for diversity or multicultural issues. If there is a diversity committee, the chair might also be the designated contact person. If a patron is looking for someone who is the individual responsible for coordinating multicultural efforts it can be nearly impossible to determine who that individual might be unless it is clearly indicated in a staff directory, contact page or on a page for multicultural or diversity services. The contact person could be designated to distribute the query or information as needed. This information can be linked with the rest of the "Contact" information, or on a "Staff," "Liaisons" or "About" page.

- Publicize the library's diversity-related programmatic, instructional and outreach activities and initiatives, and provide contact information for those responsible for these endeavors. Tools such as a facebook page or twitter page are being used by some libraries. For example, the University of Michigan Library Diversity Committee is responsible for a twitter feed related to diversity at http://twitter.com/um_ldc and linked from its page at <http://www.lib.umich.edu/library-diversity-committee>. The University of Tennessee's Diversity committee also sponsors a twitter, facebook and YouTube presence related to diversity efforts at <http://www.lib.utk.edu/diversity/activities/UTKlibDiversity2-pointO.html>.
- Create a diversity web page: gather a wide variety of accessible resources on all aspects of diversity in the library, and package them in a way that emphasizes ease of use and support for the community. Even if there are several librarians who work to provide these services, a designated web page would be easier to find than by searching staff rosters and guessing by job title. The presence of such a web site lets the readers/viewers know that diversity does, indeed, matter. See the Appendix A for examples of diversity committee web pages.
- Include images of people from diverse cultures on web pages, perhaps even on the "Ask a Librarian" page.
- Create translations of the welcome page in various languages. For two examples see: Rutgers <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/> and Yale <http://www.library.yale.edu/>.
- Include statements that indicate how diversity is valued as a critical part of the mission, purpose, vision, values, and strategic plan of the library. This value should permeate all aspects of the organization: hiring, firing, recruitment, retention, policies, architecture, design, location, projects, programs, promotions, celebrations, incentives, budgets, marketing, management styles, training, deadlines, strategic planning, families, meetings, performance.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on ARL libraries. The Association of Research Libraries provides many opportunities and efforts for diversity recruitment, retention, and training within libraries. The organization also sponsors leadership and career workshops, diversity scholars, and initiatives to assist libraries and librarians in their efforts to increase diversity awareness and inclusion at their libraries. There

have been many publications related to ARL's diversity efforts, including studies to evaluate racial and ethnic diversity in academic libraries; facilitating cultural diversity in college and university libraries (including a SPEC kit); creating a multicultural organization; recruiting and retaining diverse populations to the library profession; and success of diversity initiatives at ARL. All of these efforts are important for enhancing diversity awareness and training. It is hoped that libraries will also consider the importance of reflecting that diversity in their web presence. The web is an important source of information for students, faculty, and the outside world, and the library's web presence often serves as their gateway. As mentioned earlier, many libraries are engaged in diversity efforts and initiatives, yet that information may not be readily available via the library's public web pages. Increasing the visibility of diversity efforts and initiatives on their web page, may increase the perception of the library as a welcoming and supportive environment, as well as provide greater access to these important resources.

APPENDIX A

Diversity Statements found:

- Ohio State University Libraries <http://library.osu.edu/sites/staff/diversity/>
- Ohio University Libraries <https://www.library.ohiou.edu/coll/diversity/>
- Pennsylvania State University Libraries <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/diversity.html>
- Rutgers University Libraries <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/about/diversity/diversity.shtml>
- University of Arizona <http://www.library.arizona.edu/about/organization/diversity.html>
- University of Connecticut <http://lib.uconn.edu/Diversity/index.htm>
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (diversity goals) http://www.library.illinois.edu/committee/diversity/strategic_goals.html
- University of Iowa Libraries: Under values: <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/about/strategic.html>
- University of Maryland <http://www.lib.umd.edu/groups/diversity/>
- University of Michigan <http://www.lib.umich.edu/library-diversity-committee>
- University of Minnesota <https://wiki.lib.umn.edu/CES/DiversityActionPlan> (diversity action plan and goals)
- University of Oregon Libraries <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/diversity/initiatives.html>
- University of Tennessee <http://www.lib.utk.edu/diversity/University> of Wisconsin Madison <http://diversity.library.wisc.edu/state.htm>

APPENDIX B

- Diversity Committees: The following provides links to pages that either discuss diversity committees or provide diversity webpages sponsored by diversity committees.

- Auburn University Libraries <http://www.lib.auburn.edu/dean/docs/diversity.html> 838
- Indiana University – Purdue University Library <http://www-lib.iupui.edu/about/diversity> 839
- North Carolina State University <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/diversity/programs.html> 840
- Ohio State University Libraries <http://library.osu.edu/sites/staff/diversity/> 841
- Ohio University Libraries <https://www.library.ohiou.edu/coll/diversity/committee.html> 842
- Penn State <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/diversity/committee.html> 843
- Rutgers University Library Advisory Committee on Diversity http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/staff/groups/diversity_com/charge.shtml 844
- University of California Libraries (7) <http://library.ucsc.edu/laucdiversity> 845
- University of California, Santa Barbara <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/internal/committees/diversity/> 846
- University of Cincinnati Libraries Cultural Diversity Committee <http://www.libraries.uc.edu/libraries/rwc/faculty/committees/culturaldiversity.html> 847
- University of Colorado at Boulder <http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/adminservices/committees.htm> 848
- University of Connecticut - <http://lib.uconn.edu/Diversity/> 849
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign <http://www.library.illinois.edu/committee/diversity/charge.html> 850
- University of Kansas Libraries <http://www.lib.ku.edu/diversity/> (although not updated since 2008). 851
- University of Kentucky Libraries – word and pdf documents of committee reports can be found through a site search <http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/comrpt0506.html> 852
- University of Maryland Diversity Team <http://www.lib.umd.edu/groups/diversity/> 853
- University of Michigan Library <http://www.lib.umich.edu/library-diversity-committee> 854
- University of Minnesota Libraries Diversity Outreach Collaborative: <https://wiki.lib.umn.edu/AP/DiversityOutreachCollaborative?from=AP.DiversityOutreachCommittee> 855
- University of Oregon Libraries <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/diversity/> 856
- University of Tennessee at Knoxville <http://www.lib.utk.edu/diversity/> 857
- University of Wisconsin-Madison a “cultural diversity working group” found through library site search <http://diversity.library.wisc.edu/main.htm> (last updated 1999). 858
- Yale University Library Diversity Council <http://www.library.yale.edu/lhr/diversity/> 859

APPENDIX C. SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2011.02.001.

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